

Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2354) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the very notion of freedom of expression was recently on trial in the Netherlands. The popular Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders was charged with discrimination and incitement of hatred after he made a movie depicting Islamic clerics who incite violence in the name of religion. He was prosecuted not for his actions, but for his words. That is a scary thought.

There was only one proper resolution here, and, thankfully, the court did the right thing. Wilders was acquitted of all charges. The court ruled that his statements might be offensive to Muslims, but fell within the bounds of political free debate.

Freedom of speech is a God-given right to which every person and every nation is entitled. It is no coincidence that our country's Founding Fathers deemed it so important they listed it first in the Bill of Rights. A country that refuses one's freedom of speech is doomed to grow stagnant. How can it develop as a society when it stifles or tries to punish opinion? As Wilders himself said, "Every public debate holds the prospect of enlightenment." He certainly is correct.

And that's just the way it is.

THE TRUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor and a privilege to be here speaking on the House floor. It is interesting these days being a part of Congress. The media is given unfettered access to so much because we believe that people should be entitled to the truth. In fact, many libraries around the country have the line "the truth shall set you free." Of course, most people don't know where that came from. It was Jesus talking about him being the truth, and he was the truth. A lot of libraries that put that up don't realize that's what it is talking about. And I imagine there are a lot of reporters who have used that same line, and they don't know where that came from.

But what gets troubling is when reporters have access to complete transcripts, video, and they intentionally set out to deceive the public. It seems to happen a great deal. I personally

think it is one of the reasons that Fox News has just taken off so strongly, because people can see that the other cable news networks, so many of them at least, have such a slant. They don't give you the whole truth. There is nothing fair or balanced about some of the presentations. I know personally, having been on a CNN show where they cut your mike off for 4½ minutes, trash-mouth you for awhile, turn your microphone on, and then refuse to acknowledge that there is even the possibility that what you're saying is true when you know, indeed, it is true.

But this happened just here in the last week. I was on a Fox Business show, and we were talking about the money being spent by this White House and also comparing that to the Bush White House, and I had the data, absolute factual data that, for example, in the Bush White House, there were 447 total staff, and in the Obama staff there are 454 total White House staff.

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You wouldn't think seven additional people would be that big of a deal except that nearly a fourth of the Bush White House staff—102 people, in fact—made under \$40,000; whereas, in the Obama White House, there is no paid staff member who gets less than \$40,000. So you see dramatically the difference. I was pointing out that perhaps, in the Obama White House, because of all the greatness of this White House as compared to prior White House staffs, that you deserve to be paid more because you're associated with so much more greatness in this White House.

It's interesting to see over the last 6½ years I've been in Congress that there are an awful lot of people in the mainstream media, especially in Washington, who do not understand sarcasm, who do not understand facetiousness. So, at times, it's funny to say things sarcastically, knowing that they won't get it.

But in any event, we also commented on the fact that there were all these—I think 34—czars in the Obama White House, and they're getting paid tremendous amounts of money. So Fox News had published an article, and they pointed these things out. They were talking about the interview, and they got all of the quotes accurate.

As they pointed out, it said: "The White House released its annual salary report to Congress, and like anything in Washington, it depends on who you ask if they went up too much or are an adequate reflection of the tough economic times and have moved down."

This is the writing of Kimberly Schwandt with Fox News.

Ms. Schwandt goes on to say: "The salaries, which can be seen here, show that about a third of the employees make more than \$100,000 per year and the lowest earn \$41,000, except for three people who are working for no compensation, or zero annual salary; 21 employees made the maximum of \$172,000.

"The White House backs the figures, saying that salaries went down an average of \$150 per person and that total salary spending decreased, in part, due to the total number of staffers going down as well."

Then a quote from spokesman Eric Schultz from the White House: "President Obama is deeply committed to continuing to reduce costs in government. However, some critics say they are spending too much, like Representative Louie Gohmert, Republican of Texas."

He quoted me accurately as saying: "In the White House, in looking at it, this administration's got over 450 employees. Now, under the Bush administration, there were over 100. About a fourth of the employees made less than \$40,000."

"Fox News fact-checked, and the Congressman's statements do pan out, with 102 of the 447 employees on the 2008 list having salaries of less than \$40,000."

Another quote from me, I said: "I guess, you know, there's so much greatness when you associate with this White House you deserve to be paid more. I don't know," he said.

"Gohmert added another sarcastic jab, 'Don't forget the 34—the 34 czars that are out there dictating policy, and let's face it. When you're a dictator, you need to be paid more.'"

Then it points out: "As the economy faltered, President Obama enacted a pay freeze earlier in his administration for top wage-earners. Wednesday, at a Twitter town hall, he referenced the freeze."

Of course, as we've learned from this White House and as we know from the House rules, the President never lies or misrepresents, but certainly there are many facts that are just wrong. For example, when the President ordered our troops to bomb Libya and be involved in what he called a "kinetic attack" in Libya, which was clearly military action, he said we would be there for days, not weeks or months. It has turned out it's months and maybe years unless Congress gets the Senate to go along with one of the things we passed here in the House, to cut off the spending in a country where this President is fighting for and with a group that may turn out to be worse than the bloodthirsty, mean-spirited Qadhafi has been.

In any event, there was an article written in The Hill newspaper. Again, this was fact-checked by Fox News, but it's just interesting. You hear about it all the time, the slant of the mainstream media. It's interesting because The Hill has reporters like Molly Hooper. I've never had her be anything but completely honest and truthful. She has always, that I'm aware of, been fair to me and fair in her reporting that I've seen; but this one is a person named Judy Kurtz, who just, I have to say, was dishonest. This is the story that Judy Kurtz wrote this week, July 6, in The Hill.